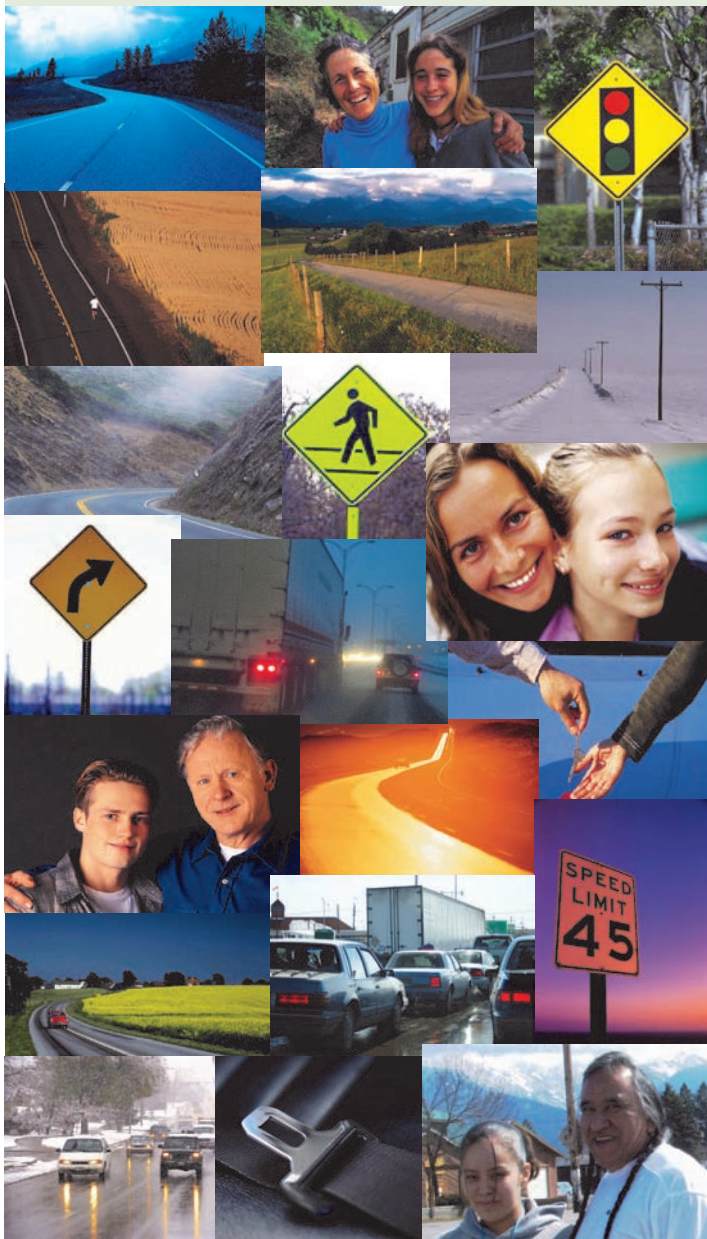


The Parent Role In Teen Driving and Graduated Driver Licensing



in Montana



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THE PARENT ROLE IN TEEN DRIVING

Welcome to the world of teen driving! Teen driving is an exciting time for families. Teenagers want to drive and parents want to reduce their “chauffer” duties. However, teen driving is dangerous. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death and injury for teenagers because teens lack driving experience. Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) laws in Montana aim to decrease this risk by introducing teenagers to the “art of driving” in phases. Parents are also needed to help increase the safety of their teenage drivers by knowing and fulfilling the “Parent Role in Teen Driving.”

What is the Parent Role in Teen Driving?

1. Know Montana’s GDL laws
2. Supervise teen driving
3. Set family driving rules and limits
4. Impose consequences for violations



Why is the Parent Role in Teen Driving So Important?

- **Because parents will know** that they are doing what they can to increase the safety of their teen drivers
- **Because parents will know** first hand how their teenagers are progressing toward becoming safe drivers
- **Because parents will know** where their teens are and what they are doing so that they do not take unnecessary risks



1. KNOW MONTANA'S GDL LAWS

The following summarizes Montana's GDL laws that go into effect July 1, 2006.

STEP 1 – Instruction Permit

Who: Anyone under age 18 that does not have a driver's license or permit before July 1, 2006

When: When permit is obtained in a state-approved driver education program at age 14 ½ or without driver education at age 16

How long: Minimum of 6 months

Conditions:

- 50 hours of **supervised driving (at least 10 hours must be at night)** by a licensed parent/guardian or another licensed driver age 18 or older approved by parent/guardian
- Each occupant must wear a seatbelt
- NO traffic or alcohol/drug citations



STEP 2 – Restricted License

When: When Step 1 is successfully completed

How long: 1 year or until age 18

Conditions:

- Each occupant must wear a seatbelt
- NO unsupervised driving between 11:00 pm and 5:00 am (limited exceptions may apply)
- For the first 6 months, no more than 1 non-family passenger under age 18
- For the second 6 months, no more than 3 non-family passengers under age 18

STEP 3 – Full Privilege License

When: When Step 2 is successfully completed or reach age 18



Visit www.opi.mt.gov/mcasearch/ to view the full text of this law, including how GDL applies to motorcycles (codified at M.C.A. 61-5-131 to 134)

2. SUPERVISE YOUR TEEN'S DRIVING

Driver education is the beginning of the process of learning to drive, but teens need many, many hours of practice to become safe drivers. Thus, MT GDL laws require parents to provide their teens with a minimum of 50 hours of practice driving before they are eligible for a restricted license. Many teenagers may require even more.

Parent Tips for Supervising Driving

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!! Practice as much as possible, *even after your teen gets a restricted license*

Who: Practice with teen and parent *only* in the vehicle. And, remember 3 things:

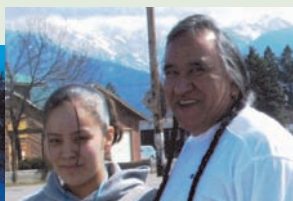
1. Remain calm and focused
2. Making mistakes is part of learning
3. Practice driving is serious, but should also be interesting and engaging

What: Practice the driving skills that your teen is learning. Begin with basic skills such as turning, parking, and backing up. Then, practice more complex skills such as changing lanes and merging

When: In the beginning, practice in daylight and good weather. As your teen's skills increase, *gradually* expose your teen to different driving conditions, including a variety of roads, weather, and times of day

Where: In the beginning, practice in safe, low-risk driving conditions. Start out in empty parking lots or remote rural roads. As your teen's skills increase, progress to quiet neighborhood streets and later to busier roads and highways

Why: Learning to drive is a complex, ongoing process requiring responsibility and dedication from both parents and teens. New drivers need a lot of practice to gain enough experience to handle daily driving hazards and unexpected situations. Teens will show the greatest improvement in the first 1,000 to 5,000 miles of driving



Remember

Be in the “practicing mood”: Practice when you are both ready, are in good moods, and have sufficient time

Adjust mirrors and seats before starting the vehicle

Always wear your seatbelts and use your headlights day and night!



Come to a complete stop: At stop signs and for right turns at red lights

When proceeding from a stop: Look left, then right, then straight ahead, and then left again before proceeding

Keep your eyes moving: Use your mirrors to check around and behind the vehicle every 6-8 seconds

Keep at least a 4 second space between your vehicle and others

Avoid the "No-Zone" with trucks or busses: This is about 15 feet on all sides. If you cannot see truck drivers in their mirrors, they cannot see you either

Speed increases braking distance: Double your speed / quadruple your braking distance

Vehicle weight increases braking distance: Double your weight / double your braking distance



Use a Driving Log

It will take about 2 hours per week for 6 months to complete 50 hours of practice driving:

- Use the driving log on the following pages to track your teen’s practice driving and your teen’s progress toward becoming a safe driver!

PRACTICE DRIVING LOG

Use this log to track your teen's 50 hours of practice driving (including 10 hours at night).

This log belongs to: _____

[illegible]

PRACTICE DRIVING LOG

Continue to track your teen's 50 hours of practice driving (including 10 hours at night).

[illegible]

PRACTICE DRIVING LOG

Continue to track your teen's 50 hours of practice driving (including 10 hours at night).

[illegible]

3. SET FAMILY DRIVING RULES AND LIMITS

Montana law sets guidelines for teen driving, but families need to determine other rules and limits for their teen drivers. Make sure that both state and family rules are very clear from the beginning. Talk to your teen about safe driving every chance you get.

Driving Rules/Limits for Your Family

Require seatbelt use: This applies to your teen and all passengers at all times



Prohibit driving after alcohol or drug use: This applies to your teen as the driver of any vehicle

Prohibit riding with someone who has used alcohol or drugs: This applies to your teen as the passenger of another vehicle

Require compliance to speed limits: Stress that this applies at all times because crash forces at high speeds kill

Limit teen passengers: According to Montana's GDL laws, with a restricted license, your teen can have no more than 1 non-family passenger under 18 for the 1st 6 months, and no more than 3 non-family passengers under 18 for the 2nd 6 months

Limit unsupervised night driving: According to Montana's GDL laws, with a restricted license, your teen cannot drive unsupervised between 11:00 pm and 5:00 am. However, you should consider setting an earlier driving curfew — between sundown and 9pm — especially on the weekends for the 1st 6 months



Require a full

report: Require information about each trip before leaving, including where your teen is going, with whom, and when they will return so that you know where your teen is (and when to worry)

Make few exceptions! The purpose of limiting driving under high-risk conditions is to allow teens to get needed driving experience under safer conditions

Limit Distractions and Driving

Require your teen to limit distractions while driving. Because driving is a new task for teenagers, they really need to focus. So, require your teenager to reduce or eliminate distractions while driving.

- **Prohibit cell phone use while driving:** Require your teen to stop at a safe place, preferably a parking lot, to make or receive a call
- **Prohibit other “technical distractions” while driving:** Prohibit playing with the radio, CDs, two-way radios, computers, games, etc., while driving
- **Prohibit “horseplay” from passengers while driving:** Require your teen to keep passenger play to a minimum while driving
- **Prohibit eating and drinking while driving:** Prohibit your teen from consuming food and drink while driving
- **Prohibit drowsy driving:** Make sure your teen knows not to drive a vehicle if he or she is sleepy due to alcohol use, late nights, prescription medications, etc.
- **Prohibit emotional driving:** Make sure your teen knows not to drive when they are highly emotional, whether it be happy, mad or sad!
- **Talk about it!** Think about other driving distractions and discuss them with your teen



Choose an Appropriate Vehicle

Choose a safe, reliable vehicle for your teen driver:

- Mid- to full-size sedans and station wagons with small engines and airbags are safest for teen drivers
- Under certain conditions, small trucks and SUVs may be more prone to roll-overs than other types of vehicles
- High-performance cars may encourage youth to drive beyond their experience level

4. IMPOSE CONSEQUENCES FOR VIOLATIONS

The purpose of having state and family driving rules and limits is to increase the safety of your teen driver. However, rules and limits will not work if they are not enforced. The state will do its part to enforce penalties for violations of state laws. However, parents must do their part to enforce compliance to state and family driving rules and to enforce consequences for violating them.

State-imposed Penalties

Consequences for Step 1 offenses:

- Your teen will not be allowed get a restricted license if any of the following offenses occur — fewer than 50 hours of supervised practice, a seat belt violation, a traffic violation or an alcohol/drug violation

Penalties for Step 2 violations:

- With a restricted license, violations include a seatbelt violation, a night driving restriction violation, or a passenger restriction violation
- **First Offense:** 20-60 hours of community service
- **Second Offense:** community service plus suspension of driver's license for 6 months



Parent-imposed Consequences

Make consequences relate to losing driving privileges:

- For a day, weekend, week, month, etc., depending on the violation
- Other consequences will not be as effective in sending the messages: “You must be a responsible driver ” and “I am serious about you following the rules and limits for driving”

Make consequences known: Set consequences for common violations *before they occur* so that your teen knows what to expect

- Getting a speeding ticket
- Coming home < 30 minutes after curfew
- Coming home > 30 minutes after curfew
- Lying about their whereabouts

OTHER SPONSORS & PARTNERS



AAA Mountain West

www.aaa.com



Department of Justice

Motor Vehicle Division

www.doj.mt.gov



Office of Public Instruction

Traffic Education Program

www.opi.mt.gov



Department of Transportation

Highway Traffic Safety Division

www.mdt.mt.gov



**Montana Traffic Education
Association**

**Montana Council for Maternal &
Child Health**

mcmch@sy-key.com



**Montana Chapter, American
Academy of Pediatrics**

www.aap.org



**MT DPHHS, EMS & Trauma Systems
Section**

<http://montanaems.mt.gov>



Montana Motor Carriers Association

www.mttrucking.org

Additional Resources about Teen Driving

- ◆ Partners for Safe Teen Driving
<http://www.safeteendriving.org/>
- ◆ Road Ready Teens
<http://www.roadreadyteens.org/>
- ◆ NETS Network of Employees for Traffic Safety
<http://www.trafficsafety.org/worklife/novice.asp>
- ◆ National Safety Council
<http://www.nsc.org/issues/teendriving/>
- ◆ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov>